

# Juba Arabic For Beginners



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# **Juba Arabic For Beginners**

By

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with

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## **FOREWORD**

The citizens of Southern Sudan speak around 51 different languages, of which Juba Arabic is only one. Dr. Dick Watson of SIL, who wrote this book, was involved in training Sudanese teachers in a programme of education in the mother tongue introduced by the Ministry of Education of the Southern Region in 1977. This program aimed to encourage more children to persevere with their schooling by making it easier for them to read and write, since they could learn in their mother tongues.

Once again, with the advent of peace in 2005, it is possible to put a programme of mother tongue education into effect. Once again, SIL is partnering with the Ministry of Education in this vital endeavour.

At the same time, the value of languages of wider communication should not be overlooked. Dick Watson wrote a course in Juba Arabic because he understood the importance of communication, and Juba Arabic is a form of Arabic used widely in Southern Sudan for communication between people who do not share a mother tongue. It binds together people of different ethnic backgrounds, even those with little or no education.

In reissuing this book, SIL in Sudan hopes that many foreigners can be encouraged to learn a language which will bring them closer to ordinary Southern Sudanese and at the same time will come to appreciate the importance of language in any kind of development work.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 This Course and How to Use It

This course is a Juba Arabic adaptation of Sudanese Colloquial Arabic for Beginners by Andrew and Janet Persson with Ahmad Hussein. It has been written to help those who have come from abroad to Southern Sudan and want to be able to talk to their Sudanese colleagues, friends, and neighbors in their everyday language. It uses the sort of Arabic spoken in Juba and in most other parts of Equatoria Region. Students should notice differences in local dialects and adapt to them. Even within Juba there are differences between the way Sudanese from different backgrounds speak. Each student should therefore be guided by the way his own teacher speaks.

The lessons are designed to be used either in a class situation with a trained teacher or by individuals with a Sudanese friend acting as "teacher". It is not a reference grammar or a "teach yourself" book. The course has been written in Roman script for the present but in the future Arabic script may be added for those Sudanese teachers who may be educated in it.

Each lesson contains a dialogue, notes and drills on new grammatical points, and a vocabulary of new words in the lesson. An introduction to pronunciation is given in Section 2 below.

Dialogue: First, the student should listen as the teacher reads the whole dialogue through. Then, the teacher should read it again with the student repeating each sentence or part of a sentence after him, taking care to imitate the pronunciation and intonation as closely as possible. Finally the teacher should read the whole dialogue through once again. Dialogues should be memorized for thorough learning and use in practical situations.

Notes and Drills: The student should read through the explanations and examples beforehand, and then work through the drills with the teacher. Each drill should be performed in accordance with the instructions, and if possible, extra drills could be constructed along the lines of those in the lessons.

Vocabulary: The vocabulary for each lesson should be memorized. It is impossible to make conversation unless one can remember basic vocabulary without conscious effort.

No one should expect to learn to speak Juba Arabic simply by studying this course. From the time he has completed the first lesson a student must put into practice what he has learned by speaking it with Sudanese friends, shopkeepers and anyone else he meets. The Sudanese are renowned for friendliness and hospitality and no one needs to be afraid to try out the little Juba Arabic he knows.

One of the best supplement to this course is a little notebook in which to write new words and expressions. Students will also find it useful to tape record their teacher reading the dialogue and drills for each lesson. They can then get extra practice on their own time. LAMP by Brewster and Brewster (1977) contains good instructions for taping.

Although these lessons attempt to give a graded progression of vocabulary and grammatical constructions, the student need not be locked into them. Lessons or vignettes which you develop in response to your own immediate needs and interests are more productive than those developed by anyone else for you. Do not hesitate to elicit words and texts on your own; make tape recordings for frequent listening; ask the same questions of many people until you can predict their responses. Above all, spend time listening to the people, and as able, interacting with them. Also, don't be afraid to jump ahead to a funeral or wedding lesson as the need arises--the other lessons will still be there to come back to when you are ready. Make your study relevant and enjoyable. Then add perseverance and you are guaranteed success.

## 2 Pronunciation of Juba Arabic

### 2.1 The consonant sounds

Juba Arabic has omitted or changed several of the more difficult Arabic consonant sounds. In this regard it is a "simplified" language. Following is a list of omitted or changed consonants:

Arabic	"Educated" JA	Juba Arabic
h	dahar	h or Ø      Ø daar 'back'

H	Humaar	h or Ø	Ø umaar 'donkey'
gh	gharb	g	g garb 'west'
kh	khamsha		k kamsa 'five'
Sh	shahar	sh or s	s saar 'month'
Z	9aawz	z	j auju 'want'
D	dahar		d daar 'back'
S	suura		s sura 'picture'
T	talab		t talab 'order'
9	9arabi		Ø arabi 'Arabic'
	double consonants		single consonants
	sukkar		sukar 'sugar'
	dakhkhal, etc.		dakalu 'enter/put in'

"Educated" Juba Arabic varies, depending upon speaker and audience experience in written Arabic or northern colloquial Arabic. With regard to pronunciation the most noticeable characteristic is the use of h and sh, at least in some words. z is a sign of education in some areas, but is common in some rural dialects where the vernacular uses it.

The full inventory of Juba Arabic consonants is given in the chart below and in a listing with examples at the end of this section.

	BILABIAL	ALVEOLAR	ALVEO-PALATAL	VELAR	GLOTTAL
vl. plosive		t		k	(')
vd. plosive	b	d	j	g	
nasal	m	n			
vl. fricative	f	s	(sh)		(h)
vd. fricative	v	z			
lateral		l			
flap		r			
semi-vowel	w		y		

Voiced plosives (**b**, **d**, **j** and **g**) are sometimes voiceless at the end of words and always at the end of utterances.

Glottal stop (') is rare but necessary in a few words, e.g. **la'** 'no'.

**f** not only involves the upper teeth and lower lip but also the upper lip. This can often be observed when a southern speaker pronounces the **f** in English words, e.g. fill, fall. **ny** occurs in a few words, such as gony 'frog'. **ng** occurs in a few words such as neng neng.

Be sure to flap the **r**.

Though (sh) and (h) are rare in Juba Arabic, they are included in this course for the sake of those who want to use them. It is easier to drop them, than it would be to add them if they were not written. However, **h** is not written at the end of words because it is never heard there in Juba Arabic, e.g. **jinee** 'pound (Ls)'.

## 2.2 The vowel sounds

The vowel sounds are basically **a**, **e**, **i**, **o** and **u**. Each of the vowels may sound somewhat more close or open, depending upon their environment. The more open varieties occur in unstressed syllables, especially preceding alveolar sounds, or in stressed syllables preceding **r**. For example, the **i** of both syllables of **girish** 'piastre' is more open (like /\$i/ in English **it**) than the **i** of **mile** 'salt'. The **e** of **deris** 'lesson' is more open (like /\$e/ in English **pen**) than the first **e** of **leben** 'milk'.

However, a word of caution is needed since English vowels are either more open or more close than Arabic vowels. English close vowels are in fact, diphthongs; so when a Juba Arabic vowel has diphthong quality, as the **ei** in **kweis** 'good' we pronounce it correctly; but, if not, we tend to shift all the way to an English open vowel. We must work at hitting "pure" vowels between the open and diphthong vowels of English. (Actually, if you can distinguish Advanced Tongue Root vowels from Retracted Tongue Root, you may come even closer to the real vowels of Juba Arabic.)

Double vowels. There are two uses for double vowels in Juba Arabic spelling. First, two identical vowels occur together in words where the Arabic **h**, **H**, or **9** have been omitted, e.g. **saar** for **shahar** 'month', **teet** for **tiHit** 'under', or **saa** for **sa9a** 'hour'. Double vowels in these cases are considered to belong to separate syllables and

require double pronunciation, e.g. /sa.ar/, like /sa.id/ 'help'. However, note that some speakers simplify double vowels to single, e.g. /sar/, /tet/, /sa/. (In this course h is usually written for Arabic **h** and **H**, even though it is only pronounced by educated speakers; but **9** is never written.)

Secondly, double vowels are used to indicate the stressed syllable of a word when it is not the first syllable, e.g. **umbaari** /um.'ba.ri/. Some double vowel words, such as **ta-aal** /ta.'al/ 'come', are stressed on the second syllable, so the second syllable vowel is doubled. This requires a hyphen to avoid three a's in a row (ie **taaal**). When the vowels are not alike, the hyphen is not needed, e.g. **boiid** 'far' or **yauu** 'this here'.

### 2.3 Word stress and syllable structures

Most words are stressed on the first syllable; however, stress is not predictable. Therefore, it is important that stress be indicated in the orthography. As stated in the previous section, double vowels are written to indicate stress when it is not on the first syllable. A stressed vowel is not long, but combines force and high pitch. Double vowels are used because diacritics such as apostrophe ('), are messy and easily omitted; and because stressed syllables, other than first syllables, usually correspond to long vowels in Arabic. For example, **katiir** 'much' in Arabic is stressed on the second syllable because the vowel is long. In Juba Arabic most words are stressed on the same syllable as in Arabic, but not because of vowel length, as there is none in Juba Arabic. For this reason it is not necessary to write one-syllable words long, e.g. **bet** 'house', though **beet** in Arabic.

Word stress is sometimes grammatical, for example, **weledu** (stressed on the first syllable) is an active verb 'to give birth', but **weleduu** (stressed on the final syllable) is a passive verb 'to be born'.

There are a few diphthongs, written with **y** or **w**, e.g. **aynu** 'look!', which contrasts with **ainu** 'see, look'. However, most adjacent vowels are not diphthongs, e.g. /a.i.nu/ is three syllables.

### 2.4 Examples of consonants and vowels

The list of examples below is given for the student to become somewhat familiar with all of the consonant and vowel sounds before starting into lesson one. The teacher should read through each group of words for the student to listen; then he should read each word for the student to mimic. It is not necessary to master each sound before going on to lesson one.

**CAUTION:** The teacher must understand that these words are not to be learned as vocabulary items, but only to be practiced for pronunciation. English meanings are given only to assure that the Juba Arabic word practiced is the one intended.

### 2.5 Consonants

<b>b</b>		<b>k</b>	
bab	door	ketiir	many
bed gidaada	egg	kubri	bridge
bedri	early	kamaan	and, also
<b>d</b>		kamsa	five
degiig	flour	kalaas	finished
deris	lesson	kokoora	redivision
dakulu	enter	<b>l</b>	
dahar	back	leben	milk
<b>f</b>		lemuun	lemon
fatuur	breakfast	lisa	not yet
afamu	understand	<b>m</b>	
fil	elephant	moya	water
<b>g</b>		medereesa	school
guruush	piastres	mumkin	possible
gufa	basket	<b>n</b>	
ganamooya	goat	nas	people
garb	west	aniina	we
<b>h - O</b>		num	sleep
hawa	air	nahaar de	today
habuub	wind	<b>r</b>	
helu	sweet	rajil	man
humaar	donkey	rakabu	cook



<b>j</b>		rotaan	language
jibu	give, bring		
jawaab	letter		
jebel	hill		
<b>s</b>		<b>w</b>	
samaga	fish	waid/wahid	one
suk	market	wenu	where
sa	hour, watch	welid	boy
sabuun	soap	<b>y</b>	
senduuk	box	yamiin	right
sura	picture	yom	day
		yauu de	here
<b>sh/s</b>		<b>z</b>	
shamaal	north	zol	person
ashurubu	drink	zerif	envelope
shubaak	window	zahare	purple
<b>t</b>			
tani	again		
talaata	three		
teksi	taxi		
tawaali	straight		
talab	order request		
tilmiis	pupil student		

## Vowels

<b>a</b>		<b>i</b>	
Bari	Bari people	ita	you
haja	thing	mile	salt
mara	woman	min	from
talaata	three	kis	bag
		ketiir	much
		gebiila	tribe
<b>aa</b> (when h or 9 is dropped)			
laam/laham	meat		
baar/bahar	river	<b>o</b>	
ta-aal/ta9aal	come	gowi	hard
		kokoora	redivision
<b>e</b>		zol	person
geni	live	yom	day
bileel	night	okot	sister
bet	house		
esh	bread	<b>u</b>	
		sukar	sugar
<b>ee</b> (when h is dropped)		mumkin	possible
teet/tehet	under	ainu	see
		sabuun	soap
		lemuun	lemon

## DERIS NIMIRA WAHID

## LESSON 1

Kalaam maa sidu dukaan	Dialogue with a shopkeeper
s: sidu dukaan, z: zabuun	shopkeeper, customer
z: Salaam taki.	Hello. (Literally, your peace)
s: Ahlen.	Welcome.
z: Ita kweis?	Are you well?
s: Ana kweis, ma bataal. Ita kweis?	I am well, not bad. Are you well?
z: Kweis, ya sabii. Sabuun kasiil fi le ita?	Good. Do you have washing soap?
s: Ai fi. Ita deru kam?	Yes I have. How much do you want?
z: Jibu le ana itiniin. Fi sukar?	Give me two. Is there sugar?
s: Sukar kalasu.	The sugar is all gone.
z: De shunuu?	What is this?
s: De mile. Ita deru mile?	This is salt. Do you want salt?
z: Ai, kis to be kam?	Yes, how much is a bag of it?
s: Kis to be arba guruush.	A bag of it is 4 piastres.
z: Jibu le ana wahid.	Give me one.
s: Ita deru haja tani?	Do you want anything else?
z: Kalaas, ana ma deru haja tani. Shukran.	That's all; I don't want anything else. Thank you.
s: Kalaas, shukran. Maa salaam taki.	That's all, thank you. Goodbye. (with your peace)

## Notes and Drills

- The **u** between **sid** 'owner', keeper' and **dukaan** 'shop' is a transitional vowel, used to separate two consonants, especially in the case of two **d**'s. Likewise, **i** separates **tn** in **itiniin** 'two'.
- Greetings. Singular and plural forms are distinguished, but there are no masculine-feminine distinctions.
  - Both **salaam taki** and **salamaat** are singular forms for 'hello'; **salaam takum** and **salamaatkum** are plural forms. (Some people say that salamaatkum is used only when a person has narrowly avoided death. Others don't agree.)
  - The reply is usually **ahlen** 'welcome' or **salaam taki kamaan** 'your peace also'.
  - Kweis** 'good/well/okay' is singular; **kweisiin** is plural.
- Personal pronouns also distinguish singular-plural, but not masculine-feminine.

Repeat each example after the teacher. Then respond with the appropriate phrase as the teacher indicates which person(s).

ana kweis	'I'm well'
aniina kweisiin	'we are well'
ita kweis	'you are well'
itakum kweisiin	'you(pl.) are well'
huwo kweis	'he/she is well'
humon kweisiin	'they are well'

Next, use the same phrases for questions and answers; e.g.

Ita kweis? 'Are you well?'

Ai, ana kweis. 'Yes, I'm well'

- 4 Possessive pronouns follow the thing possesses; e.g. **kis taki** 'your bag' **kis to** 'his/her/its bag'.
- 5 Statements and yes-no questions differ only in intonation. **De mile.** 'This is salt' has falling tone on the last syllable, but **De mile?** 'Is this salt?' has rising tone on the last syllable. Content questions, e.g. **De shunuu?** 'What is this?', have a falling tone, like statements.

Repeat each example after the teacher. Then respond with an appropriate phrase when the teacher points to a picture.

De mile. 'This is salt.' De esh. 'This is bread.'

De zet. 'This is oil.' De shay. 'This is tea.'

De sukar. 'This is sugar.' De bed gidaada. 'This is an egg.'

De degiig. 'This is flour.' De laham. 'This is meat.'

De sabuun. 'This is soap.' De kis. 'This is a bag.'

De shunuu? 'What is this?'

Next, make and respond to 'yes-no' questions, e.g.

De mile? 'Is this salt?'

Ai, de mile. Ita deru mile? 'Yes, this is salt. Do you want salt?'

La' de ma mile, de esh. 'No, this isn't salt, it's bread.'

- 6 The verb **fi** 'exist' means 'there is/are' or 'have/possess', e.g.

Fi mile? 'Is there salt?'

Ai, fi mile. 'Yes, there is salt.'

La', mafi mile. 'No, there is no salt.'

Fi le ita mile? 'Do you have any salt?'

Ai, fi le ana mile. 'Yes, I have salt.'

La', mafi le ana mile. 'No, I don't have any salt.'

Practice these phrases as the teacher points to various persons and pictures of food items.

(It is also correct to say **Fi mile le ita?** or **Mile fi le ita?**)

- 7 **Deru** 'want', like all verbs in Juba Arabic, does not distinguish person or gender; however, it is an exception to most in that it sometimes distinguish singular and plural. The plural form **deriin**, is used in these lessons, but it is common to hear **deru** for plural as well. Repeat the following phrases after the teacher. Then respond with the appropriate phrase as the teacher points.

Ita deru laham? 'Do you want meat?'

Ai, ana deru laham. 'Yes, I want meat.'

La', ana ma deru laham. 'No, I don't want meat.'

Huwo deru esh? 'Does he/she want bread?'

Ai, huwo deru esh. 'Yes, he/she wants bread.'

La', huwo ma deru esh. 'No he/she does not want bread.'

Itakum deriin sukar? 'Do you want sugar?'

Ai, aniina deriin sukar. 'Yes, we want sugar.'

La', aniina ma deriin sukar. 'No, we don't want sugar.'

Humon deriin sabuun? 'Do they want soap?'

Ai humon deriin sabuun. 'Yes, they want soap.'

La', humon ma deriin sabuun. 'No, they don't want soap.'

**Auzu** or **auju** 'want' is also quite common, though not used in these lessons. Auzu or auju are heard in some dialects.

**8 Jibu** means 'bring', but it is also used for 'give/hand me'.

Practice this verb with various pronouns and objects as the teacher points.

For example:

jibu le ana sukar 'give me sugar'

jibu le huwo sukar 'give him sugar'

jibu le aniina sukar 'give us sugar'

jibu le humon sukar 'give them sugar'

**9 Be** is a preposition meaning 'by, for', e.g. **be kam?** 'for how much?' or **be arba guruush** 'for four piastres'.

Notice that every English clause must contain a verb, but a Yucca Arabic equative clause does not, e.g. **kis to be kam?** 'bag of-it for how much?' i.e. 'How much does a bag of it cost?'

Practice asking the prices of various items and answering with **wahid girish** 'one piastre', **itiniin guruush** 'two piastres', or **arba guruush** 'four piastres'. Don't try to give realistic prices since these are the only numbers you have studied at present.

Esh be kam? 'How much is bread?'

Esh be arba guruush. 'Four pt.'

Mile be kam? 'How much is salt?'

Mile be itiniin guruush. 'Two pt.'

**10** The simple form of most verbs ends in -u, which could be called a verb marking suffix. This simple form is past tense unless it is used as an imperative, e.g. **jibu** 'bring, give!'. The glosses should give the -ed 'past' form of the English. However, for simplicity we usually use only the simple form of the English (which is imperative or present tense).

**11** The main staples in the south, not mentioned in the lesson, are **dura** 'millet, sorghum' and **isheriif** 'maize/corn'. **Ruz** 'rice' is also available, but **game** 'wheat' is not, except as flour.

**Kelimaat**

**'Vocabulary'**

ahlen	welcome	kalasu	finished, to finish
ai	yes	kamaan	also
ana	I/me	kasiil	clothes-washing
aniina	we/us	kis	bag
arba	four	kweis	good, well, okay
bataal	bad	kweisiin	good, well (pl)
be/bi	by, for	la'	no
bed gidaada	chicken egg	laham/laam	meat
de	this	le	to
degiig	flour	ma	not
deriin	want (pl.)	maa	with
deris	lesson	maa salaam	goodbye
deru, auzu	want, need	mile	salt
dukaan	shop, store	nimira	number
dura	millet, sorghum	ruz	rice

esh	bread	sabuun	soap
fi	there is/are, have possess, exist	salaam	hello, peace
game'	wheat	salamaat	hello (sg)
girish	piastre (pt.)	salamatkum	hello (pl)
guruush	piastres (pt.)	shay	tea
haja	thing	shukran	thank you
humon	they/them	shunuu	what
huwo	he/him, she/her, it	sid	owner, keeper
isheriif	maize/corn	sukar	sugar
ita	you (sg.)	taki	your, of you
itakum	you (pl.)	takum	your (pl)
itiniin	two	tani	else, other
jibu	bring, hand	to	his/hers/its
kalaam	talk, dialogue	wahid/waid	one
kalaas	finished (adj.), okay	zabuun	customer
kam	how much/many	zet	oil

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